

Applicant: Bartholoma et al.
Application No.: 10/502,215

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application, as amended. By the present amendment, claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 14 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced into the application by these amendments.

In the Action, the drawings were objected to based on the finding in the Action that the "counter counter-sleeve" must be shown or canceled from the claims. Applicants note that this was intended to refer to the "counter sleeve 3" which is shown in the drawings and described in detail throughout the Specification. Appropriate correction has been made to claim 1 and accordingly withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite based on a few minor formalities noted in the Action. Specifically, the limitation "the counter counter-sleeve" in claim 1 was noted as lacking antecedent basis. Claim 1 has been corrected as noted above in order to obviate this rejection and properly refer to "the counter-sleeve (3)". Claims 1 and 3 were also rejected based on the use of the phrase "and/or" which has been corrected as noted in the claim amendments.

Claim 1 was also rejected for using the phrase "ring-like" which has been corrected as noted above to now recite that there is a "ring-shaped" contact surface which is believed to be definite. With respect to claim 8, the phrase "or the like" has been deleted. Claim 9 has been amended to recite that the at least one terminal screw comprises a stud screw and accordingly claim 9 is now believed to be in compliance

Applicant: Bartholoma et al.
Application No.: 10/502,215

with Section 112. In view of the foregoing amendments, withdrawal of the Section 112 rejection of claims 1-14 is respectfully requested.

In the Action, claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 4,927,187 to Sanford et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 1 is directed to a terminal connection having a threaded sleeve (2) with a radially extending collar or flange (5), having peripheral contours that are non-round or polygonal and define radially projecting regions or edges. The threaded sleeve (2) is connectable to a coupling piece (6) in a detachable manner. The coupling piece (6) can be connected to a counter part, a retaining nut and/or a through opening of a housing. The coupling piece (6) has a depression (7) on the side to which the threaded sleeve (2) is connected. Projections (9) which are directed radially inwardly extend from a front edge region of the depression (7) in an insertion direction of the threaded sleeve (2) for engaging the collar (5) of the threaded sleeve (2) in the coupling position. Intermediate spaces (14) are provided between the radially inwardly directed projections (9) of the coupling piece (6). The size of these intermediate spaces in the radial and circumferential direction is equal to or greater than the size of the radially projecting regions or edges of the collar of the terminal connection. This provides the ability for a quick and easy connection by inserting the threaded sleeve (2), such that the projecting collar (5) extends into the depression (7) of the coupling piece (6,) and then turning the threaded sleeve such that the projections (9) of the coupling piece (6) capture the radially projecting regions or edges of the flange (5) in order to provide a quick and

Applicant: Bartholoma et al.
Application No.: 10/502,215

easy releasable connection. Of course, as shown, an elongated body (such as a wire or tube) can be connected with the threaded sleeve (2) prior to connection with the coupling piece (6) (which can be pre-mounted in a housing) in order to provide a quickly releasable connection.

In contrast to the present invention, Sanford et al. discloses a fitting with a lock wire feature which requires the installation of a collar (38) over a threaded adapter (10) as well as the use of splined adapters fitted into an oversized opening around the bore such that the tube nut (30) which is used to engage a tube (34) to the threaded adapter (10) can be lock-wired to prevent backing off of the tube nut (30) once it is fully tightened and lock-wired in place. There is no suggestion or disclosure of any type of radially projecting regions or edges on a threaded sleeve which can be inserted past projections (9) of a coupling piece (6) such that they extend into a depression (7) and can there be rotated in order to provide a releaseably engageable coupling through a simple and easy means. These features are wholly absent from Sanford et al. and accordingly withdrawal of the Section 102 rejection of claim 1 in view of Sanford et al. is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-14 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 and are patentable over Sanford et al. for the reasons noted above in connection with claim 1. Additionally, there is no suggestion or disclosure in the subject matter of claim 4 by Sanford et al. as Sanford et al. lacks the insertion and rotation. There is also no terminal screw as recited in claim 5 disclosed by Sanford et al. No screw which applies radial pressure on any collar is shown and the openings provided are for lock wire not a pressure exerting

Applicant: Bartholoma et al.
Application No.: 10/502,215

screw. In view of the terminal screw also being recited in claims 6, 9 and 14, these claims also include features which are clearly not disclosed by Sanford et al. With respect to claim 7, as there is no disclosure of inwardly directed projections (9) on a coupling piece or corresponding edges or regions of the collar being complementary to each other, this claim is also patentable over Sanford et al.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the section 102(b) rejection of the claims in view of Sanford et al. is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-14 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,763,833 to Bawa et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Bawa et al. is directed to an electrical connector fitting having a coupling nut (18) which is used to connect a body (16) to a connector hub (12). The body (16) includes a shoulder (17) which the coupling nut (18) engages. There is no suggestion or disclosure of a coupling piece having intermediate spaces located between radially, inwardly directed projections with a size of the intermediate spaces in the radial and circumferential directions being equal to or greater than that of radially projecting regions or edges of the collar which allows the radially projecting regions or edges of the collar to pass into a depression in the attachment region. Bawa et al. also fails to disclose an arrangement that can be coupled with a slight twisting action in order to form a releasable connection. Rather, Bawa et al. is directed to a threaded coupling of the prior known type in which the flange (18a) of the coupling nut (18) is engaged over a shoulder (17) of the coupling body (16). There is no suggestion or disclosure of the

Applicant: Bartholoma et al.
Application No.: 10/502,215

claimed features in Bawa et al. and accordingly, claim 1 should be patentable over Bawa et al.

Claims 2-14 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 and are patentable for the same reasons as noted above in connection with claim 1. Additionally, there is no disclosure of the elements of claim 4 with respect to the collar being rotatable after axial insertion under the projections (9) of the coupling piece. There is also no suggestion or disclosure of the terminal screw (15) that can be tightened in a radial direction for exerting pressure on an outside collar in the coupling position as recited in claims 5, 6, 9 and 14. There is also no disclosure of the number of radially, inwardly directed projections (9) of the coupling piece being the same as the number of edges (5b) of the collar as recited in claim 7 or of the required angle of rotation for joining the pieces together as recited in claim 8.

In view of the foregoing, applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-14 are patentable over Bawa et al., and withdrawal of the Section 102(b) rejection in view of Bawa et al. is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that any additional minor formal matters need to be addressed in order to place the present application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone at the Examiner's convenience so that these matters can be addressed.

Applicant: Bartholoma et al.
Application No.: 10/502,215

In view of the foregoing Amendments and Remarks, applicants respectfully submit that the present application, including claims 1-14, is in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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